

Promoting geodiversity in Suffolk



SUFFOLK LOCAL GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Draft
March 2006

Web version

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The Draft Suffolk Local Geodiversity Action Plan

Aims

- 1. To carry out a geodiversity audit for Suffolk
- 2. To carry out geodiversity conservation & management
- 3. To promote geodiversity in policy and practice
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- 5. Sustaining the Local Geodiversity Action Plan process

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INTRODUCTION

a) Geodiversity

Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils, along with the natural processes that shape the landscape. It interacts with living things and the climate, influencing the distribution of habitats and species. It provides resources such as groundwater, minerals and soils upon which economic life depends.

b) The GeoSuffolk Group

The GeoSuffolk Group is an unincorporated, nonprofit-making association of professional and amateur geologists committed to researching, interpreting and conserving Suffolk's geological and geomorphological heritage.

c) A Suffolk Local Geodiversity Action Plan

In December 2004 English Nature (Suffolk Team) contacted GeoSuffolk to inform us that English Nature had money to start a Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP) process in Suffolk.

LGAPs are the geological/geomorphological equivalents of Biodiversity Action Plans. Recent Government initiatives such as Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) have explicitly raised the profile of geodiversity within natural heritage conservation in Britain.

This document is GeoSuffolk's response to the LGAP initiative and PPS9.

A scoping document was drafted for informal consultation in December 2004, which led to further discussions. Its contents inform the present document. In October 2005 English Nature confirmed funding for the GeoSuffolk group to write an LGAP. In late February 2006 a group of thirteen people met in Ipswich for a brain-storming session to discuss the possible scope and contents of a Suffolk LGAP. The present document draws extensively on the outcome of that meeting and on the earlier scoping document. It shows what we want and what we can do.

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ABOUT THE SUFFOLK LOCAL GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

a) This document

This LGAP document sets out a series of aims, objectives, targets, and actions for geo-conservation and enhancement in Suffolk, to be achieved with the help of potential partners within stated timescales. It is intended as a tool for planning and consultation, including the development of resources to deliver the LGAP.

b) What is the boundary of the LGAP?

The Suffolk LGAP boundary is coincident with that of the administrative county of Suffolk. It includes the areas of Ipswich and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils, and Babergh, Forest Heath, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils. It includes much of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Offshore Suffolk will have a watching brief.

c) Aims of the LGAP

The Suffolk LGAP has the following five aims:

- To carry out a Geodiversity audit for Suffolk;
- To carry out Geodiversity conservation & management;
- To promote Geodiversity in policy and practice;
- Promoting Geodiversity awareness;
- Sustaining the Local Geodiversity Action Plan process.

The following pages describe in detail how these five aims will be met.

d) Further information

For more information about conserving geodiversity, see the following free booklets published by English Nature (now Natural England):

- 'Local Geodiversity Action Plans - Sharing Good Practice' (2004);
- 'Geology and Biodiversity - Making the Links' (2004);
- 'Geodiversity and the Minerals Industry - Conserving our Geological Heritage' (jointly published with the Quarry Products Association and the Silica & Moulding Sand Association 2003);
- 'Geological Conservation - A Guide to Good Practice' (Prosser, Murphy and Larwood; 2000);
- 'Natural Foundations - geodiversity for people, places and nature' (Stace and Larwood; 2002).

Contact Natural England's publications department: www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications.

e) Feedback sought by GeoSuffolk

We actively seek feedback on this LGAP document. If you have any comments or would like to be involved in implementing the Plan please contact:

GEOSUFFOLK
c/o Ipswich Museum
High Street
Ipswich, Suffolk
IP1 3QH

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SUFFOLK LOCAL GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

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AIM 1. TO CARRY OUT A GEODIVERSITY AUDIT FOR SUFFOLK

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Timescale</u>
SITES			
1.1 To carry out an audit of geo-sites	1. Complete initial survey of geo-sites begun in 2004	1. Finish survey of 83 remaining sites	Two years
		2. Review previously visited sites to consider further action.	One year
	2. Investigate further geo-sites	1. Identify and survey further geo-sites	Ongoing
	3. Create geo-site records archive	1. Create database, incl. customised SBRC 'Recorder 2000', and enter survey data	
		2. Prepare digitised site maps using a GIS programme in format suitable for LAs	
		3. Ensure independent accessibility by GeoSuffolk to database and GIS layers (with due consideration given to data protection issues)	
		4. Make paper-based archive for site record folders	
ADDED VALUE (OTHER GEO-RESOURCES)			
1.2. To carry out an audit of other geodiversity resources	1. Create computer database for recording other geo-resources	1. Set up database after carrying out pilot study GeoSuffolk	
	2. Compile survey of other geo-resources	1. Carry out survey, incl. museums and other collections, literature, borehole logs, building stones, etc.	One year
	3. Compile database of other geo-resources (links to Aim 4)	1. Enter data into database	

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AIM 2. TO CARRY OUT GEODIVERSITY CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVES	TARGET	ACTION	TIMESCALE
SITES			
2.1. To identify outstanding geo-sites with needs for conservation or management	1. Identify and prioritise outstanding geo-sites with needs for conservation or management	1. Set up Conservation Subcommittee, arrange meeting and define site selection criteria	One year
		2. Produce shortlist of target geo-sites	One year
2.2 To raise conservation profile of target geo-sites among landowners and managers	1. Disseminate information about geodiversity and importance of sites to land owners and managers	1. Create and distribute Landowners' Packs	
2.3 To secure positive management of target sites	1. Secure active co-operation and understanding of site owners and managers	1. Negotiate with site owners and managers to schedule any work agreed desirable	
		1. Prepare Site Management Plan for each site	
	2. Carry out scheduled work programme for target sites	2. Deploy funding and human resources for site development and ongoing maintenance	Ongoing
		3. Encourage site owners to inform GeoSuffolk of other activities (including other excavation work) on managed sites	
2.4 To monitor ongoing conservation and management needs of all other geo-sites	3. Monitor ongoing conservation and management needs of target geo-sites	1. Visit all target geo-sites at least once per year	
2.5 To designate certain geosites as RIGS, in agreement with landowners (link to 3.2)	1. Review conservation and management of all geo-sites	1. Visit or contact all geo-site owners every 5 years at least	
		2. Identify and prioritise any geo-sites with outstanding needs for conservation or management	
2.5 To designate certain geosites as RIGS, in agreement with landowners (link to 3.2)	1. To continue the RIGS designation process	1. RIGS subcommittee to liaise with landowners.	
OTHER GEO-RESOURCES			
2.6 To support	1. To ensure the future	1. Contact holders of	Ongoing

conservation and management of other selected geo-resources (link to 1.2.2.1)

well-being of other selected geo-resources

selected geo-resources at least once per year.

FUNDING

2.7 To secure funding for geodiversity conservation and management

1. Seek and attract funding for geo-site conservation work and other geo-resource conservation

1. Seek partners to fund site-specific conservation work

Long term

2. Explore grant and other funding opportunities

HUMAN RESOURCES

2.8 To develop voluntary labour resources for geodiversity conservation

1. To identify community groups and individuals wishing to contribute to geodiversity conservation

1. Draw up list of potential groups and individuals, and do mail-out

2. Circulate interested groups / individuals with geodiversity conservation work plans

3. Arrange site work parties and necessary training

2. Encourage development of community participation in geo-site conservation

1. Identify and liaise with potential participants

3. To address legal and health & safety aspects of voluntary labour

1. Write Health & Safety Policy (incl. on-site Code of Practice), arrange insurance provision

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AIM 3. TO PROMOTE GEODIVERSITY IN POLICY & PRACTICE

OBJECTIVES	TARGET	ACTION	TIMESCALE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS			
3.1 To embed geodiversity conservation in all LA Local Plans, Development Frameworks and agencies	1. Identify lead officer for geodiversity within each relevant LA department and agency	1. Liaise with LA officers to discuss content and direction of policy regarding geodiversity	One year
		2. Liaise with LA officers	One year

		re. practical implementation of geodiversity content in policies and plans	
	2. Liaise with LA officers to embed geodiversity conservation in plans, policies and practice	1. Circulate examples of successful incorporation of geodiversity interests into LA policies and plans	One year
		2. Develop and evaluate dialogue with LA officers	One year
	3. Secure political support among Councillors in each LA	1. Prepare local government geodiversity information packs	
		2. Discuss geodiversity with Councillors	
	4. Evaluate the success in embedding geodiversity in Suffolk LA policies	1. Collect relevant Suffolk LA policy documents and publicity	
3.2 Submit designated RIGS to Local Authority (LA) planners (link to 2.5)	1. All designated RIGS to be notified to LA planning departments	1. Contact LA planners and send RIGS details of sites in their areas	Ongoing
OTHER ORGANISATIONS			
3.3 To embed geodiversity in the policies and practice of targeted other organisations	1. To survey other organisations whose work impacts on geodiversity	1. Carry out survey of other organisations and prepare list of target organisations	Two years
	2. Audit geodiversity policies and practices of target organisations	1. Contact target organisations about their geodiversity policies	Long term
	3. To embed geodiversity awareness in policies and practice of target organisations	1. Prepare and circulate geodiversity Information Packs (linked to Aim 4.1)	Long term
		2. Liaise with target organisations about embedding geodiversity in their policies and practice, e.g. by producing Company GAPs.	
		3. Provide consultancy about geodiversity interests to developers, landowners, industry and other organisations	
3.4 To have Planning Applications reviewed for their impact on geodiversity	1. Provide locations of geo-sites to Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) planning application review system	1. Prepare geo-site plans in format compatible with system of SWT	Ongoing

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AIM 4. PROMOTING GEODIVERSITY AWARENESS

OBJECTIVES	TARGET	ACTION	TIMESCALE
COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC			
4.1 To promote geodiversity understanding and awareness among the public using a range of media appropriate to different audiences	1. Communicate Suffolk's geodiversity to widest possible audience	1. Create project website and make links to, and exchange information with, Partners' websites	
		2. Create a programme of Outreach events in Suffolk (talks, walks & trails, In Residence Project, themed days, press releases)	Ongoing
		3. Extend Suffolk Mammoth Trail project	Ongoing
		4. Create other geo-information panels	Ongoing
		5. Publish themed leaflets and other publications	Ongoing
		6. Produce a mobile exhibition facility (panels, banner, displays)	
4.2 To promote geodiversity to local communities	1. Communicate Suffolk's geodiversity at a local community level	1. Create 'Parish Packs' about significant local geodiversity	Ongoing
		2. Encourage community participation in geodiversity	Ongoing
EDUCATION			
4.3 To promote geodiversity to the education sector in Suffolk	1. Outreach to teachers and lecturers	1. Give presentations at INSET days or teachers' residential weekends, and provide consultancy service	
	2. To include geodiversity material in County curriculum resources	1. Liaise with County Curriculum Advisors	
		2. Produce new education resource: Learning about geodiversity in Suffolk (LEAGS)	
	3. Outreach to lifelong learners and associated	1. Identify lifelong learning groups, e.g. WEA, U3A,	One year

	tutors and lecturers	OUGS	
		2. Produce and circulate outreach materials about geodiversity for lifelong learning	
		3. Provide consultancy service about geodiversity for lifelong learning	
	4. Outreach to site managers and interpreters	1. Identify and liaise with site managers and interpreters about the geodiversity content of their activities	Two years
	5. Outreach to research workers	1. Identify and liaise with research workers to widely disseminate the results of their work	Ongoing
GEOTOURISM			
4.4 To promote geodiversity through Suffolk Geo-Tourism initiatives	1. Progress the 'Suffolk GeoCoast' interpretation project	1. Convene GeoSuffolk sub-committee to discuss and firm up ideas	One year
		2. Carry out feasibility study (scope, resources, partners)	
		3. Implement the recommendations of the feasibility study	Ongoing
	2. Develop other potential geo-tourism projects	1. Investigate the geo-tourism potential of the Suffolk tourist industry	Two years
		2. Report and implement findings of investigation	Long term

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AIM 5. SUSTAINING THE LOCAL GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PROCESS

OBJECTIVES	TARGET	ACTION	TIMESCALE
STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES			
5.1 To deliver a Suffolk LGAP	1. Create an appropriate structure to deliver the LGAP	1. Draft a list of potential partners	One year

		2. Survey and consult potential partners by circulating the LGAP and inviting responses	Two years
		3. Evaluate responses received, in order to create a Partnership	
		4. Audit and evaluate skills and resources of Partners	
		5. Consult with Partners about the LGAP	
		6. Implement findings of consultation in order to progress LGAP	
		7. Recommend Suffolk Geodiversity Officer(s) post (s) in order to meet optimum timescales	Two years
	2. Gather appropriate resources to implement the Suffolk LGAP	1. Carry out survey of possible financial resources inside and outside the Partnership	
		2. Carry out survey of possible human resources (knowledge and skills) inside and outside the Partnership	
	3. Widen understanding of the Suffolk LGAP	1. Make the Suffolk LGAP available to interested parties in a suitable format	

EVALUATION AND MAINTENANCE

5.2 To evaluate the project as appropriate, and respond to findings	1. Invite comment on the LGAP project from Partners and users	1. Evaluate comments received from Partners and users	
		2. Produce and implement recommendations arising from evaluation	
5.3 To maintain the progress and development of the LGAP	1. Ensure the ongoing success of the Suffolk LGAP	1. Produce and circulate Annual Review of LGAP	Ongoing

EXPLORE AND EXPAND

5.4 Explore future options for expanding the Project	1. Assess project continuation options, e.g. East Anglia Regional GAP	1. Convene meeting or discussion forum for partners	Ongoing
		2. Present findings of meeting/forum to LGAP partners for possible implementation	

1. To welcome new ideas and technologies to develop the Project

1. Be open to contributions from sources present and future, for possible implementation

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APPENDICES

A. GEO-SITE CONSERVATION

While sharing many aspects of its geology, geomorphology, landscape and soils with the adjacent counties of Cambridgeshire, Essex and Norfolk, Suffolk has three outstanding features of geodiversity interest.

- The 'Craggs', the most complete sequence of these marine deposits of Pliocene and Early Pleistocene age, including the Coralline Crag, which has its sole exposure in the county;
- Important Pleistocene glacial and interglacial deposits, including the type-sites for the Bav Anglian, Hoxnian and Ipswichian stages;
- Outstanding examples of coastal ness landforms - there are more in Suffolk than anywhere in Britain.

The Geological Conservation Review (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) has 42 citations for Suffolk, covering five 'Blocks' of interest: 'Quaternary East Anglia' (22 citations), 'Neogene' (12), 'Pleistocene Vertebrates' (4), 'Coastal Geomorphology' (3) and 'Tertiary Mammals' (1). These citations represent 35 geological and geomorphological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in Suffolk which are statutorily protected and managed by English Nature. There is no statutory protection for other significant geo-sites.

A measure of protection may be afforded to a second tier of significant geo-sites through the Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) system. RIGS have equivalent status to County Wildlife Sites. The conservation of both kinds of natural heritage site is reliant on the voluntary co-operation of landowners and managers, and both kinds are recognised within the local planning system. GeoSuffolk is accepted by the Government agency English Nature as the competent authority for designating RIGS in the county.

GeoSuffolk encourages and offers advice and support to owners of other geo-sites to help them conserve their sites.

B. THE SUFFOLK GEODIVERSITY PROJECT

In 2004 GeoSuffolk secured a DEFRA Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund grant through English Nature to further develop geodiversity work in the county. A Geodiversity Project Officer was appointed in August 2004 on a short contract until March 2005. He was supported by a second Officer on a two-month temporary contract (September to November 2004). Both posts were hosted for employment purposes by Ipswich Borough Council Museum Service, and managed in partnership with the GeoSuffolk Group.

By late February 2005 the following outputs had been achieved:

- 46% of a total of 156 selected Suffolk geo-sites surveyed for a) access and ownership details, b) extant geo-features, and c) site boundaries. Sites were selected on a range of criteria. A 'Survey' public contact leaflet was produced in-house. The results were collated on paper and survey records, backed up with site maps.
- Contacts made with local authority planners, who stipulated that agreed RIGS information be presented with maps showing site boundaries.
- Seven Suffolk Mammoth Trail (SMT) panels were commissioned using specialist artwork. The panels interpreted the wildlife of a range of Pleistocene sites: one Norwich Crag, three interglacial and three interstadial sites. A SMT leaflet was commissioned, and a museum gallery panel drafted.

C. OTHER GEOSUFFOLK ACTIVITIES

The group has been in existence since 1993 as the Suffolk RIGS Group, and has been meeting quarterly and publishing committee minutes since 2002. The name 'GeoSuffolk' was adopted as the public face of the organisation in 2003 and also to reflect its wider scope of interest. There are 11 members of the committee, including a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Its aims include:

- Raising public awareness of Suffolk geology/geomorphology;
- Providing a source of information on Suffolk geology/geomorphology;
- An audit of geo-resources aimed at designating Suffolk RIGS.

In 2003 the Group secured a grant from English Nature to produce three leaflets promoting Suffolk geology, 'GeoSuffolk', 'GeoIpswich' and 'Deben Estuary'. Additional leaflets, 'Dunwich' and 'Errat' followed in 2005. Funding for these and other projects has come from the Curry Fund of the Geologists' Association, Suffolk Environment Trust, Friends of Ipswich Museum, Connect Fund (£5000), Coast and Heaths) and UKGE. Other partners have been Ipswich Museum, Amberfield School and the Suffolk Naturalists' Society (SNS).

Site conservation and management work has been carried out at Sutton, with consultation work carried out at other sites. Some sites have (with owners' agreement) been designated as RIGS.

GeoSuffolk chaired an East Anglian RIGS meeting in 2005, with the proceedings published in the Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society.

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To our children:
We give you the Earth

Publication note

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